

A Method of Treating Common Colds

By Harrington and Richardson in the Manual of Practical Hygiene

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Common colds, or inflammation of the respiratory tract, localized either in the upper or lower portion of said tract, are extremely common, and are undoubtedly of a contagious nature.

The exact relationship of the various organisms found in the secretions to the pathological condition is not by any means clear.

Colds of this type are oftentimes more uncomfortable than immediately dangerous, but they may be, undoubtedly, in some instances followed by more severe and even fatal infections.

Persons suffering from such colds should, therefore, be isolated, as far as that may be possible, and every effort should be made to render the secretions of the nose and mouth harmless.

In this connection attention may be called to a method of local disinfection said to have been practiced successfully among employees of a large city department store.

“A small saucepan, or the bottom of a chafing-dish, heated by an

alcohol lamp or gas stove, is to set up in a small room, such as a bathroom. Use a pint of water, in which has been put five teaspoonfuls of formalin (Schering's).

“The person with a cold in the head, the nearer the beginning of it the better, goes into the room in which this vaporizing outfit has been started. Doors and windows are closed. The patient does not get close to the apparatus, but sits any place in the room, perhaps reading a book, and stays there as long as it is possible to breathe, till it seems, indeed, as if the next breath would cut like a knife. It usually takes about eight minutes. The patient then turns out the lamp and leaves the room. One such treatment will stop a cold in its first few hours. Two or three treatments at four-hour intervals will suffice on the second day of the cold.”

The success attending this method of treatment of common colds would certainly warrant its trial in more serious infections of the respiratory tract.

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